WHAT IS CLAIMED IS:

1. A method implemented by a client computer for retrieving a multimedia presentation from a server over a network and presenting the presentation, the method comprising:

performing one or more benchmarking tests on the client computer to determine one or more operational parameters of the client computer;

retrieving a presentation data structure from the server identifying a plurality of software elements and data resources used in reproducing the presentation, the software elements and resources being associated with varying types of operational parameters;

selecting a subset of the elements and resources based upon the client's operational parameters determined in the benchmarking tests; and

retrieving the selected elements and resources to thereby reproduce the presentation.

2. The method of claim 1, wherein performing one or more benchmarking tests comprises testing the client computer's CPU speed.

3. The method of claim 2, wherein testing CPU speed comprises measuring time spent by the CPU processing transformations of vertices in a three-dimensional renderer.

4. The method of claim 1, wherein performing one or more benchmarking tests comprises testing the client computer's graphics fill rate.

5. The method of claim 4, wherein testing the graphics fill rate comprises measuring time spent by a three-dimensional renderer running on the client computer in filling triangles.

6. The method of claim 4, wherein testing the graphics fill rate comprises measuring time spent by a three-dimensional renderer running on the client computer in reading texture maps.

7. A computer readable medium storing program code for, when executed, causing a computer to perform a method for retrieving a multimedia presentation from a server over a network and presenting the presentation, the method comprising:

performing one or more benchmarking tests on the client computer to determine one or more operational parameters of the client computer;

retrieving a presentation data structure from the server identifying a plurality of software elements and data resources used in reproducing the presentation, the software elements and resources being associated with varying types of operational parameters;

selecting a subset of the elements and resources based upon the client's operational parameters determined in the benchmarking tests; and

retrieving the selected elements and resources to thereby reproduce the presentation.

8. The medium of claim 7, wherein the step performed by the computer of performing one or more benchmarking tests comprises testing the client computer's CPU speed.

9. The method of claim 8, wherein the step performed by the computer of testing CPU speed comprises measuring time spent by the CPU processing transformations of vertices in a three-dimensional renderer.

10. The method of claim 7, wherein the step performed by the computer of performing one or more benchmarking tests comprises testing the client computer's graphics fill rate.

11. The method of claim 10, wherein the step performed by the computer of testing the graphics fill rate comprises measuring time spent by a three-dimensional renderer running on the client computer in filling triangles.

12. The method of claim 10, wherein the step performed by the computer of testing the graphics fill rate comprises measuring time spent by a three-dimensional renderer running on the client computer in reading texture maps.